

FCC MAIL ROOM

NOV 9 1992

Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)
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COMMENTS ON WT Docket No. 98-143

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I am Henry R. Leggette, WD4Q and I communicate with amateur radio operators throughout the four states of Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee on regularly bases. These people have indicated to me, why do we want to change our standards? I feel as an amateur radio since 1969, this rare hobby should be protected.

I am whole heart in agreement with your statement in WT Docket No. 98-143 (III, 9) and it states " The Amateur Radio Service rules are designed to provide emergency communications, advance radio technology, improve operator skills, enhance international goodwill, and expand the number of trained operators, technical and electronics experts". To me this is not happening and I share this view from others. At this time, I feel that advancing radio technology, improving radio operating skills, expanding the number of trained operators, technical and electronics experts are all on the down side of amateur radio. As an older amateur radio operator, I feel that we have been let down. Why have we been let down? It is because; the FCC or we have lowered the standards. We should be looking into ways to increase our standards and increase the ranks of amateur radio.

In 1997, there were only 961 Novice Class applications and at the same time you received 21,416 applications for the no-code Technician Class operator licenses submitted. Has the no-code Technician license replaced the Novice class license? No, it is not that! This is why I say people are looking for an easy way into amateur radio. A good percentage of them will not seek any higher class of licenses. This is happening across the United States in many instances. What has happened, the standards were lowered and everyone has crowded into the no-code ranks? I feel that the no-code Technician and the Novice classes should be discontinued. In February 1992, prior to allowing the no-code requirements to become law, I advised in comments to some of my fellow amateur radio operators that this would happen in a few years. I invite you to review the number of radio amateur operators applied for the Novice Class license five years after it went into law or effective. That would be one of the best measuring tools you could use at this point.

You published numbers as to the current Novice class license and the current No-Code Technician class license. In order to have a detail analysis; your published number should have included to Technician Plus class license as well. I am sure the numbers are much lower than the No-Code Technician. My analysis would be the general public is want something for nothing. However, a person can not become a technical person if you don't prepare for it.

In our colleges and universities today, what is the ratio of engineers majors to sociology majors? What is the ratio of mathematics majors to marketing majors? If it becomes a desire to raise the number of engineering majors and this can be accomplished by recruiting the best students to the present requirements. We would not remove all the engineering major requirements and attempt to steer the sociology majors to engineering. However, we would not attempt to change to marketing people to mathematics by removing all calculus from the curriculum. We have to remember the same analysis in amateur radio. Everyone in this country is not the type to become an amateur radio operator. I suggest

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establishing a mentoring program to bring people up to a standard that may have a desire to pass the current license classes.

In late 1996, as a Supervisor/Manager with the FAA there was an interference problem with many, many aircraft traveling from Atlanta, GA. to Dallas, TX? We in the FAA searched the airwaves until it was discovered that this interference was coming from an amateur radio station near Birmingham, AL. and a No-Code Technician class. It was my desire to locate this person, it could have caused an aircraft accident due to a no experience No-Code Technician. This should not be and we need to stop and reconsider before we again lower the standards.

In 1969, when I was first licensed as a Novice Class operator, I could not go to an Amateur Extra Class operator at the first up grade. Why is this; are they sharper today than in 1969? No! We as American have lowered the standards.

It is apparent from the League's survey that most radio amateur's operators agree that fewer license classes than six are preferable. I do feel that the present international Morse code should remain the same as 20 wpm, 13 wpm and 5wpm. This being 20 wpm for Amateur Extra, 13 wpm for the Advanced /General and 5 wpm for the Technician Class. This would allow less changing in the 1998 Biennial Regulatory review and everyone would have to adjust to a minimum of changes. The question would arise about other countries have such lower Morse code speed. Frankly, I don't feel this country is ready to lower the code speed at this point. We should do this in order to remain the top country in the world as we have been for so many years.

If we lower the Code requirements to below 13 wpm, an estimate of 50 % to 60 % of the current General and Advanced classes would apply for a waiver for the Amateur Extra Class of license. The standard means curve would be loaded to the right rather than the center. We need to have a code speed higher than 13 wpm in order to maintain a correct ratio of amateur radio operators on the means and medians curve. Why, go to 14 or 15 wpm on the code; maintain the present 20-wpm and it will be fewer expenses on everyone and the tax payer.

My reason for these statements, a large group of citizens in the United States are of the type to go on and break the law, who cares. The moral of the country has change in the last years until it is not realistic. We need to stop and reconsider, where are we headed and not make it so easy until everyone can pass. The moral of this country has left me to believe there is no moral.

I noticed an article in the newspaper here in Memphis in relationship to TerraNova scores. The TerraNova was norm-referenced in 1996 which means students around the country took the test to create a base line. I detected via that article there is a problem in the school system locally, inter-city school scores falling below the County, State and National average. It is something wrong with our procedures that we want to say that these children are all ready to enter the work force and may obtain amateur radio licenses.

I worked in the city school system for one day after retirement, my job was to teach calculus and other high level mathematics. I discovered that these children are not ready, they should be repeating the 5th and 6th grades when they say we are juniors and seniors. Again, our standards have been lowered to almost nothing. If this group of people get into amateur radio it will be worst than the CB bands ever were.

We should have a mentoring program in order to get these younger operators up to a standard speed that we would appreciate other countries that our call signs are being received. Turning them a loose on the bands in the present conditions will make me not proud to own them as amateur radio operators from the United States of America.

Finally, the amateur radio community in the above mention states and the majority of this country feels that we have been let down. The feeling is that the standards are lowed and this will be a Citizen Band operation in less than five years.

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